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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: TWO SEPARATE GROUPS PROTEST AT EMBASSY
AGAINST LACK OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN

Sensitive but Unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) Two small groups, for a total of fewer than 100 people, protested in front of the U. S. Embassy on Monday, February 28. The groups sought to commemorate attacks on ethnic Armenians in Sumgait in 1988. Both protests seem to have been intended to counterbalance reports of efforts to commemorate killings of Azerbaijani citizens in Khojalu. Both protests were peaceful, both passed statements to Embassy authorities. End Summary.

ONE -- SMALL PROTEST IN FRONT OF EMBASSY

2. (SBU) A group of 70-80 students from Yerevan State University protested in front of the Embassy against an alleged lack of concern for the Armenian victims killed in 1988 in Sumgait at noon February 28. The students carried several banners with slogans such as "Save Karabakh from Sumgait's destiny," "Unpunished Sumgait causes new Sumgait in the World," "Yerevan State University condemns Budapest crime," "Armenian Genocide concerns not only Armenians but people all over the World." A student representative also handed over a letter.

STUDENTS' PROTEST LETTER

3. (U) Begin text of letter (original in English, text provided as given):

The students' unions of YSU [Yerevan State University] appeal to acknowledge and condemn the slaughters happened in Baku, Sumgait, Ganzak and other places in 1988, where thousands of innocent Armenians, mainly women, old people and children fell victims.

We are worried about the dead silence of the world society concerning the slaughters happened in armenian populated areas in Azerbaijan, which in future will undoubtedly cause a new bloodshed both in our territory and in other parts of the world.

We want to remind the world that the mass slaughters of 1988 carried out towards Azerbaijan populated armenians had a terroristic character, the main target of which was to prohibit the Artsakh people from the using the right for self-determination, which come from both the norms of the international human rights and from the internal state of the constitution of the USSR.

We raise our voice to the whole world that we will pursue the prohibition of any unhuman actions all over the world and appeal to the civilized world to prevent any kind of crime towards humanity.

The Students' council of YSU
The United Trade Union of the Students' society of YSU
The Students' scientific society of YSU
End text.

TWO -- EVEN SMALLER PROTEST IN FRONT OF THE EMBASSY

3. (SBU) Also on February 28, a group of roughly 10 people gathered to hand over a letter of protest at 3:00 p.m. This gathering of self-styled intellectuals gave us not only a 3-page letter

(excerpts follow), but an autographed copy of a book by one of the protestors. The group also carried banners, including, "Unpunished Sumgait gives birth to new Sumgait," "University of Monte Melkonyan," "Students of Brusov University," "Sumgait, Baku, New York, Beslan are all links of the same chain," "Crime does not have expiry date," "Azerbaijan (picture of an axe, referring to the 2004 killing of an Armenian military officer in Budapest) Council of Europe - is this how you see 21st Century," "Putin, Bush and Shirak, before solving the problem of Karabagh, punish Sumgait," and "Democractic Progressive Party" (logos, with abbreviation).

APPEAL TO THE CONGRESS OF THE USA

14. (SBU) An extremely abridged text follows (original in English, quoted as given). Begin text:

Recently the member of the commission of the Congress of the USA Dan Burton appealed to colleagues to discuss the so-called question of Khojalu. It goes without saying, the discussion deals with the firm right of each to voice openly his point of view on any question, moreover, if it deals with human rights, crimes against humanity. It is for sure that no one can take away this right from the Congressman Barton. However, there are such questions, which cannot be discussed and even dangerous to be presented one-sidedly, ignoring the main principle of the jurisprudence: "to listen to the other side!" And we, participants of the meeting are gathered here at the symbolic monuments - khachkars, established in the memory of the victims of slaughter, organized pogroms by Azerbaijan in Sumgait in 1988, and in Baku in 1990, not only to bow before the blessed memory of our compatriots, but to urge the Congress of the USA and Dan Burton, personally, to listen to the other side.

...
End text (paragraph 1 of 13).

EVANS